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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

A Cost Effectiveness Comparison of Resident and Non-Resident Intermediate Level
School (ILS)

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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AY 08-09

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Date: 03/17/09

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 2009		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2009 to 00-00-2009	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE A Cost Effectiveness Comparison of Resident and Non-Resident Intermediate Level School (ILS)				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) United States Marine Corps,Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Combat Dev,Marine Corps University, 2076 South Street,Quantico,VA,22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 35	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: A Cost Effectiveness Comparison of Resident and Non-Resident Intermediate Level School (ILS).

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Thesis: In the ever changing and developing combat environment that exists for Marine leaders, the process of evaluating and refining the educational experience must be continuous.

Discussion: Improving Marine officers Professional Military Education (PME) is critically important for the continued excellence of the officer corps. The challenge for the Marine Corps is to find the correct balance between providing an applicable education for current and future leaders while meeting operational requirements in a wartime environment. Educating our leaders is vitally important for the continued advancement of excellence in the Marine Corps, so meeting this challenge should be a priority.

This paper will compare the costs and perceived effectiveness of both Resident and Non-Resident Command and Staff College educations. It will further compare the cost effectiveness of both programs and discuss alternate systems for providing the required education. With respect to costs, time is the cost directly examined. Not the cost in time to the individual Marine, but the time that the Marine Corps is paying to ensure that a Marine receives his/her education. Because this is a time cost to the Marine Corps, it can be associated with a dollar cost to the Marine Corps for that time. There is no cost in time for the Non-Resident Command and Staff education. Therefore dollar costs are used for the comparison. The effectiveness of an educational experience will vary greatly with the individual students. Therefore the perception of effectiveness as perceived by past studies and surveys, as well as promotion rates for graduates were used for the comparison.

Conclusion: Dedicated time for study, be it Resident or Non-Resident, is the most influential factor regarding the effectiveness of the educational experience with regard to intermediate level school. Because of the dedicated time allotted to Resident ILS, the per student costs are much higher than those of the Non-Resident. The effectiveness of Resident ILS has been determined to be higher, but not enough to offset the significantly higher costs. Therefore when comparing the two programs, Non-Resident ILS is much more cost effective than Resident ILS.

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THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

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Preface

This paper has been undertaken due to a personal interest in Command and Staff College level of Professional Military Education (PME). I had completed approximately three-quarters of the Non-Resident course when I was told that I'd been selected to attend the Resident Course of the 2008-2009 academic year. After several months in attendance, I felt the Resident Course experience had been good for me personally, but not necessarily for the Marine Corps. The benefits presented throughout the course continually placed the professional benefits to the Marine Corps secondary to those of the individual Marines. In Marine Corps aviation, the perceived benefits of attending Resident PME are primarily personal. The professional benefits associated with attendance are offset by the loss of proficiency due to reduced operational experience.

I began to think that there had to be a more efficient program that could capture the personal and professional benefits of the Resident course while, at the same time, reduce the dollar cost associated with the current program. I have determined to examine the cost effectiveness of both programs to propose a more efficient educational program that will capture the benefits of the current Resident program while reducing dollar costs over time; I shall then make recommendations for expanding those benefits to the individual officers of the Non-Residency course.

An area for further development that is not addressed in the paper are the dollar costs associated with the facility and curriculum development of both the Resident and Non-Resident Courses.

I would like to extend my appreciation to several individuals for their support and advice with the following acknowledgements:

Dr. Donald Bittner, Professor of Military History, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, for his mentorship and support while undertaking this project.

Dr. John Gordon, Professor of National Security Affairs, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, for his mentorship and support throughout the CSC program.

Lieutenant Colonel Bjornar Lunde, NOR Army, Faculty Advisor, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, for his leadership and guidance throughout the CSC program.

Ms. Linda Rohler, Registrar, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, for her assistance with obtaining background material and student information critical to the development of the paper.

My wife, Melissa, and our two sons, Ray and Adam, for their understanding and support throughout all my endeavors while in the Marine Corps.

Improving Marine officers Professional Military Education (PME) is critically important for the continued excellence of the officer corps. The challenge for the Marine Corps is to find the correct balance between providing an applicable education for current and future leaders while meeting operational requirements in a wartime environment. Educating our leaders is vitally important for the continued advancement of professional excellence, so meeting this challenge should be a priority. This paper will compare the financial costs per student and perceived effectiveness of both Resident and Non-Resident Command and Staff College educations. It will further compare the cost effectiveness of both programs and discuss alternate systems for providing the required education. In the ever changing and developing combat environment that exists for Marine leaders, the process of evaluating and refining the educational experience must be continuous. All four services have resident and non-resident equivalents. Each of the residency courses is approximately ten months in length and only a small percentage of officers are able to attend the full length resident intermediate level courses. Currently, only the Navy and Air Force also offer the option to acquire a Masters Degree through their non-residency programs.

HISTORY

The beginnings of resident Marine Corps officer Professional Military Education can be traced back to the establishment of the School of Application in 1891. This school became the Marine Officers School in 1908 and in 1919, the Marine Officers Training School. By 1920, under the guidance of Colonel John C. Beaumont, this school would be renamed The Basic School (TBS). He further designed a three-tiered system of education with the development of the Field Officers Course in October 1920 and the Company

Officers Course in July 1921.¹ These three courses formed the foundation for what General Lejeune termed "Marine Corps Schools". In the mid 1920s, correspondence courses were established to parallel the Field Officers and Company Officers resident courses to expand the audience of the Marine Corps Schools. During the development of the Marine Corps amphibious doctrine of the 1930's, two of the schools were redesignated Amphibious Warfare Senior and Junior Courses for Field Grade and Company Grade officers. These closed in 1941, but "in 1943, an operationally oriented three month Command and Staff Course, later renamed the Command and Staff School, opened at Quantico based on the need for school-trained, field grade officers with commensurate skills to serve in the Pacific Theater."² In 1946, the Marine Corps professional military education system was again organized into the three-tiered system. In 1964, the Senior School was re-designated Command and Staff College (CSC) and the Junior School became Amphibious Warfare School (AWS). In 1989, Marine Corps University was created and in 1990, the School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) and the Marine Corps War College (MCWAR) were established. In 1997, the College of Continuing Education (CCE) was created and directed to integrate all officer distance education programs within a single college.³ In 2004, AWS was renamed Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS). As of February 2009, Training and Education Command (TECOM) organized Officer Candidate School and TBS under the Training Command (TRNGCOM) division while EWS, CSC, SAW, and MCWAR fall under the Education Command (EDCOM)/Marine Corps University (MCU). CCE belongs directly to TECOM.

The Marine Corps CSC is a part of MCU and is staffed with civilian and military faculty for course development, instruction, and administration. Classes generally consist of approximately 200 students of which approximately half are Marines. The other half of the students are sister service personnel, civilian agency personnel, and international officers. The current curriculum is divided into four sections that include:

Warfighting...from the Sea (WFTS), Culture and Interagency Operations (CIAO), Operational Art (Op-Art), and Leadership.⁴ The students are divided into twelve conference groups (CG) of approximately sixteen students each that are led by one civilian and one military faculty advisor per CG.

The Marine Corps non-resident ILS program is the Command and Staff College Distance Education Program (CSCDEP) under CCE. It completes the ILS requirement for approximately 80% of Marine Officers and the curriculum is developed from the CSC curriculum and is divided into eight courses that include: Theory and Nature of War, National and International Security Studies, Operational Art, Joint Warfighting, Small Wars, MAGTF Expeditionary Operations, Amphibious Warfare, and Operational Planning. CSCDEP is taught through seminars conducted online or in person by their adjunct faculty whom conduct weekly two to three hour seminars. The adjunct faculty members are organized into classes with approximately twelve students per class by eight regional coordinators throughout the U.S. and Okinawa, Japan.⁵

PER STUDENT COST COMPARISON

Determining the costs of any institutional education is a multi-dimensional issue. There are finite dollar costs for each academic year that are based on facilities, staff, and materials. With respect to CSC, the variables are increased significantly because not only

are there the previously mentioned costs, but also those costs directly attributed to the students. The true student cost is their time for the education, but associated with that time there are student pay variables. There are also less tangible human costs to be considered that include allocation of personnel, recruitment, and retention. Furthermore, the costs associated with resident and non-resident CSC are not mutually exclusive. Because the CSCDEP curriculum is molded from the resident curriculum, not all costs can be separated. Therefore, facility and curriculum development costs for both CSC and CSCDEP will not be included in this comparison. The civilian and military staffs that have curriculum developmental roles will also not be considered. Determining the actual dollar cost of either resident or non-resident CSC is beyond the scope of this paper; therefore, only the dollar costs not related to facilities or curriculum development will be used for comparison. CSCDEP material costs will be included in that program's total cost under the assumption that it is material used in addition to the CSC course curriculum.

Determining the dollar cost not associated with facilities or curriculum development for resident CSC will include individual student pay, permanent change of station (PCS) requirements, and military faculty advisors not in a curriculum development billet. Individual pay factors would include rank, time in service, dependants, incentive pay, and bonuses. For this reason, the resident cost determination will be based on a Major with over twelve years of time in service. This Major will have a dependent, live off base, and have no incentive pays or bonus. This "average USMC student" determination is based on the authors interactions with his classmates for AY '08-'09 in which he is a junior Major in the class with only eleven years in service, is not

aware of any USMC students without at least one dependent, and only knows of one USMC student who lives on base housing. The class does have 29 aviators in it, but their aviation career incentive pays and bonuses will not be considered due to multiple variations.⁶ This average student estimate will generally give a lower end estimate, but will suffice for the comparative purposes of this paper. The school length is just over 10 months, so 10 months of pay and allowances will be used to determine student cost. This does not include any time or costs associated with relocation either before or after the academic year since travel allowances are included in the PCS cost estimation. Additional time often associated with a PCS has also been excluded since it is designated leave time that every service member has available for use at his/her discretion. The PCS requirement will be an assumption that attending the course will require one additional PCS move for 60% of USMC students. This is based on the estimate that only 20% of CSC residents were previously stationed locally and 20% of CSC students will remain locally upon graduation. These percentages are based solely on estimates by the author.

The academic year is fully inclusive of August through May. The five months of pay and allowances in 2008 will cost \$42,249.80 and the five months in 2009 will cost \$43,112.70 (\$6,088.2 Base pay⁷ + \$202.76 BAS + \$2,159 BAH for 5 months in '08 plus \$6,325.5 Base pay⁸ + \$223.04 BAS + \$2,074 BAH for 5 months in '09). As previously mentioned, no incentive pays or bonuses will be added, although the AY 08-09 class contains 29 aviators, many of whom are receiving a \$650 per month aviation career incentive pay and annual bonuses ranging from \$7,000 to \$20,000. Total pay and allowances for this average student would be \$85,362.50.

	Base Pay /month	BAH /month	BAS /month	Total AY Pay
Student Pay '08	\$6,088.2	\$2,159	\$202.76	\$42,249.80
Student Pay '09	\$6,325.5	\$2,074	\$223.04	\$43,112.70
Total '08-'09 Student Pay				\$85,362.50

Table I – Average Student Pay and Allowances Estimation

PCS costs will vary greatly depending on number of dependants, movement weight, and distance of the move. The total cost for USMC PCS moves for FY 09 is expected to be \$473,952,000. With 29,072 expected movers, that averages out to \$16,302.70 per PCS according to the Department of the Navy FY '09 Budget Estimate.⁹ This average cost will be used for the analysis although the true cost will likely be higher for most O-4's. If 60% of the USMC portion of the class is expected to require one additional move, then to filter this cost to a student average cost it will be \$9,781.62 per student.

	Per mover	% extra moves	Total (averaged/student)
PCS Costs	\$16,302.70	.6	\$9,781.62

Table II – PCS Costs Averaged per Student

There are eleven active duty USMC faculty members, and for inclusion of annual cost, only eight will be included based on their title as simply "faculty advisors."¹⁰ The others are assumed to play a role in curriculum development along with the civilian faculty. These eight are all Lieutenant Colonel's (LtCol), and an assumption must be made about their pay, time in service, allowances, and bonuses. For purposes of simplicity, they will all have dependents, be over 14 years of service, and receive no bonuses. The basis for this "average" faculty member is simply that the most junior

LtCol will have at least 15 years of service. This equates to \$45,535.8 in '08 plus \$46,269.2 in '09 or \$91,805 each (\$6,596.40 Base pay¹¹ + \$202.76 BAS + \$2,308 BAH for 5 months in '08 plus \$6,853.8 Base pay¹² + \$223.04 BAS + \$2,177 BAH for 5 months in '09). This again is a low end estimate simply due to the fact that two of the eight are aviators that are likely receiving aviation career incentive pay and bonuses. The cost of the eight faculty advisors is \$734,440. If this cost is split amongst the 93 USMC students equates to \$7,897.20 per student.

	Base Pay /month	BAH /month	BAS /month	Total AY Pay
Faculty Pay 08	\$6,596.40	\$2,308	\$202.76	\$45,535.8
Faculty Pay 09	\$6,853.8	\$2,177	\$223.04	\$46,269.2
Total 08-09 AY Pay				\$91,805 per Faculty Advisor
X 8 USMC faculty	\$734,440	Divided by 93 students	\$7,897.20	Per student cost

Table III – Per Student Costs for USMC Faculty Advisors

The total dollar costs not associated with the facility or curriculum development for the resident CSC student for purposes of this analysis is \$103,041.32 (\$85,362.50 + \$9,781.62 + \$7,897.20).

Student Pay/Allowances	PCS Costs Averaged/Student	Per Student Cost of USMC Faculty	Total CSC per Student Cost
\$85,362.50	\$9,781.62	\$7,897.20	\$103,041.32

Table IV – Total CSC per “Average” Student Cost

For the CSCDEP program, cost determination excluding curriculum development is much less complicated. All student pay costs will not be factored since these officers are performing their regular duties in conjunction with completing the course. Some estimates and assumptions must still be made in order to determine the per student cost.

The cost for each adjunct faculty/seminar leader is \$7,300 per year.¹³ The optimum seminar size is twelve students meeting for two to three hours weekly for an average course length of two years. This will result in a \$608.33 cost per student per year. There are currently 1,444 USMC students enrolled in CSCDEP with 90 instructors teaching 121 total seminars.¹⁴ Some class participation will be larger and some smaller, but for purposes of this analysis, the optimum size will be used for determining per student cost. Similarly, variations will occur with course length depending on each student and their individual circumstances. Again, the average course length will be used. This equates to \$1,216.66 for the course. Finally, the material cost is \$312 per student.¹⁵ Material costs for the CSCDEP student have been included under the assumption that the material is additional to the developed curriculum. This brings the total cost for the CSCDEP to \$1,528.33 per student for purposes of this analysis when excluding facility and curriculum development costs.

Adjunct Faculty Pay/Year	Per Student (12 per)/Year	Per Student X 2 Year Course	Material Cost (Per Student)	Total CSCDEP Cost/Student
\$7,300	\$608.33	\$1,216.66	\$312	\$1,528.33

Table V – Total CSCDEP Cost per Student

An important issue to discuss is the costs not considered in this analysis. Civilian faculty, base support, and building operation and maintenance costs are not included in the CSC costs. However, it is important to note that total MCU appropriated funding for FY08 is \$62,955,866. CSC has 35 faculty members of the 312 MCU faculty and staff members (11.2%). If this CSC faculty ratio is applied to the appropriated funding, it amounts to over 7.06 million dollars. If this total is divided by the number of USMC students (93), the per student total is \$75,939.32. However, there are an additional 60

USMC Majors receiving intermediate education with sister service, international, and fellowship ILS programs. Therefore, they should be factored in to the total number of students receiving ILS educations at this cost. That would then give a cost of \$46,159 (7.06 mil / 153) per USMC student receiving an ILS resident education. Of note, the military pay of faculty that is included in the comparison is a portion of the appropriated funding information. Also not included in CSCDEP total, due to being considered facility and curriculum development costs, are eight CSCDEP Course Directors who develop, revise, and update the CSC curriculum, and a Government Assistant Dean that manages the CSCDEP. There is also the cost to run eight regional campuses world-wide and the management/administrative costs for the essential functions accomplished by the CCE staff. Again, this additional cost has not been included in the cost comparison, but they are significant ones worth noting.

When examining the costs previously covered, the fact that time is the real cost becomes evident. All students and faculty would be getting the same pay regardless of their location, but since CSCDEP students are filling other billets requiring Marines, the dollar costs associated with that time is not applied. The resident CSC student cost is at least 10 months. All dollar amounts are simply fiscal costs associated with that time. Time is a human cost, with dollar costs associated. The other associated human costs relating to time will vary greatly amongst students based on both their personal and professional situations. Therefore, the dollar costs previously discussed will be the sole costs referenced for the cost effectiveness comparison to follow.

EFFECTIVENESS COMPARISON

Determining the effectiveness of the any educational experience presents a great challenge. There are many factors that contribute to the effectiveness of an institution to include its curriculum, faculty, learning environment, delivery methods, and numerous individual student criteria. Some of the student criteria include initial knowledge base, receptiveness, and distractions. Ultimately, the learning effectiveness is the growth in knowledge and skills of the student at the conclusion of the experience. This will vary greatly amongst students which therefore complicates the determination of effectiveness. In order to truly determine the effectiveness of a program, it must be evaluated against its goals or mission. The mission statement of both CSC and CSCDEP: "Informed by the study of history, language and culture, CSC educates and trains its joint, multinational, and interagency professionals in order to produce skilled warfighting leaders able to overcome diverse 21st Century security challenges."¹⁶

There is no evaluation at the beginning or conclusion of either CSC or CSCDEP that would allow for a true effectiveness evaluation to occur. The intent of both courses is to ensure its graduates have reached a baseline knowledge and skill-set that includes the listed goals. Due to this limitation, an outcome observation comparison will be made of the two programs based on prior research of opinion surveys and promotion rates from Major to LtCol.

The 2001 study of Marine Corps PME programs conducted by the Studies and Analysis Division of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) hypothesized that resident PME graduates would provide a greater value to the Marine Corps than their non-resident peers. Contrary to this hypothesis, their opinion survey

results found little difference between the two. "The only performance category where resident graduates clearly stood out was in staff skills."¹⁷

In 2002 Major John Makil looked at the equivalency of resident and nonresident ILS in the Marine Corps. His paper focused on why Majors who had completed nonresident ILS had also decided to attend CSC. This survey results had similar results to those of the S&A survey in that the top reason for attending was peer-networking followed by development of staff skills. The survey that he conducted asked about the benefits of resident ILS and provided options to choose from. The top five benefits in order were: networking with peers, MAGTF officer skills, preparation for staff jobs, advanced degree, and follow on assignments.¹⁸ The paper also asked why students attend resident ILS after having completed non-resident ILS. The only options available were benefits previously mentioned. Despite this, several responders made additional comments later in the survey that indicated they did not want to attend.¹⁹ The evidence provided by the paper indicated that there was a professional perception that resident ILS was more career enhancing than non-resident ILS.

A 2003 master's thesis by Major Raul Lianez and Major Luis Zamarripa from the Naval Postgraduate School conducted a Comparative analysis of resident PME and a civilian graduate education. In their analysis, they evaluated the fitness reports of graduates before and after attending resident PME and compared them to performance trends of officers with no graduate education (NOS). Non-resident PME graduates made up the majority of the NOS subjects. Their findings indicated that attending PME graduate education resulted in an 'after' performance that was no different from the mean 'after' performance of a NOS officer. "Thus, we can infer that the subsequent

performance of an officer who attends PME graduate education is likely not significantly different from that of an officer who does not attend.”²⁰ This fitness report analysis does not necessarily determine effectiveness of the education, but an officer’s knowledge and thought process as developed in their educational experience are contributing factors in their overall performance. Therefore, the analysis does give an indication that officer’s performance improvements due to both resident and non-resident educations are similar.

The promotion rate of Marine Majors to LtCol is also not necessarily a measure of effectiveness, but is an indicator of the quality of the graduates. This quality of graduates is a result of many individual factors, one of which is the knowledge and skills that the individuals possess. Obviously influential to the knowledge and skills that a Marine officer possesses is the educational experience that he/she has experienced. For the purposes of this analysis, the FY08 LtCol selection board results and the CSC graduating class of 2004 and 2005 will be examined for promotion rates. The FY08 LtCol selection board results will be used because information regarding selected LtCol attendance to CSC has been determined in Major Joel Hoffman’s 2008 Naval Postgraduate School Master’s Thesis. The CSC classes of 2004 and 2005 will be used because all of those graduates would have been in zone for selection as of the most recent (FY10) board results.

The FY08 LtCol board results had 520 Majors in zone for promotion. Of those, 338 were selected for promotion at a rate of 65%. Of all 520 in zone, 461 of these officers had completed ILS or higher PME, of which 323 were selected (70.1%) for promotion. Of those 520 in zone, 152 had attended resident CSC. 116 of the 152 officers that attended CSC were selected at a rate of 76.3%. “This was 11.3 percentage points

higher than the overall in-zone population election rate of 65.0 percent.”²¹ To find the non-resident ILS promotion rate, simply reduce the number of resident ILS students from the total number of students who are ILS PME or higher complete gives a selection of 207 of 309 eligible or 67.0%. Those not ILS complete selected at a rate of 25.4% (15 out of 59).

	In Zone	Selected	% Selected
Resident ILS Complete	152	116	76.3%
Non-Resident ILS Complete	309	207	67%
Not ILS Complete	59	15	25.4%
Total	520	338	65%

Table VI – FY2008 Selection Chart²²

When examining the CSC graduates from the class of 2004 and 2005, the results for promotion rate are even higher. Of the graduating class of 95 students in 2004, 84 have been promoted or selected for promotion (88.4%). However, 17 of those 95 had already been promoted or selected for promotion prior to graduation from CSC so their CSC education was a non-factor for selection. Therefore, they cannot be considered as having been selected based on attributes that resulted in their attendance to CSC. When deducting those selected prior to graduation, there are 67 of 78 graduates that have since been selected to LtCol or 85.9%. This is still a much better selection rate than the Marine Corps average for FY's 06-10 (selection opportunity rates of 70%, 70%, 70%, 74.2%, and 75% respectively). The graduating class of 2005 had similar results with 82 of the 95 being selected for promotion (86.3%). Only three from this class were already selected prior to graduating, hence 79 of 92 graduates that have since been selected to LtCol for again, 85.9%. This rate does not take into account whether those selections were above,

in, or below zone. The zone for selection isn't significant, but should be noted that the FY08 board results previously mentioned were for only those in zone.

Of note, there have been many changes in the process by which resident ILS attendance has been determined over the last ten years. For the academic year 2001-2002, the previous board selection process was replaced by a panel selection of volunteers. The board selection process was reinstated for academic year 2007-2008 and has remained in place since. Because resident ILS is currently board selected, the expectation exists that those selected will have the perception of greater career potential which will result in a higher promotion rate, yet it is too soon to tell as many of those Marines have yet to be considered for promotion. However, for the academic years examined for selection to LtCol, the rates were much higher than average and the students were panel selected from volunteers.

There is no dispute that resident PME is more thorough and effective with regard to the specific curriculum developed. The question that needs to be asked, however, is "why is it more effective?" The answer is that the student has time. In separate interviews both the current Dean²³ and a previous Director of CSC²⁴ agreed that dedicated time was the most important factor of many that made the resident course more effective. The CSC student has dedicated time to prepare, reflect, and learn. In the non-resident course, this time comes from the officer's personal time. The non-resident student has a full time billet that requires his/her attention in time and energy, so the learning environment is not as compatible. CSCDEP has progressed from the "box of books" of the past to the current an all-seminar program taught either on-site or online. "Although great effort has been expended on making the DEP seminar a better learning

environment, the same degree of focused study provided at resident PME schools can never be attained.”²⁵ Improved as the course may be, the lack of dedicated time affects the student’s opportunity to learning the specified material. While the curriculum material may not be as well versed by the graduates of CSCDEP, it is important to remember that this student may be in an operational unit. During wartime operations, the environment continues to change and develop requiring continuous training and development of Marine leaders. Therefore the gain in the educational experience afforded by an extended time for study tends to be coupled with a loss in proficiency.

COST EFFECTIVENESS COMPARISON

Initial observation of effectiveness with respect to cost, it appears that the resident course may not be as cost effective as CSCDEP. The average student cost for CSCDEP (\$1,528.33) is 1.5% of that of the average student cost for resident CSC (\$103,041.32). The performance improvement of CSC graduates appears to be a non-factor. The promotion rate is higher for classes prior to formal board selection for resident ILS, but at best only 15.9% (CSC classes of 2004 and 2005). The higher promotion rate can be linked to graduation from CSC, but when factoring in the additional cost it does not appear to be an efficient method for developing officer qualities.

However, the initial observation does not account for those graduates who filled staff roles and, as previously mentioned, had staff skills that were more developed as a result of attending resident CSC. Since improvement of staff skills will vary greatly based on the officer and his/her experience, quantifying the effectiveness of this will prove less than effective. The supervisors would likely fully endorse the need for this extra cost in order to attain the quality of personnel in those billets. For those graduates

who have not had assignments where the specific staff skills were required, the cost would not appear to be an efficient expense. This obviously leads to the discussion of how to best to determine which officers will require the enhanced development of those skills. Clearly, those officers selected to attend CSC with follow on staff tours would expect to have this requirement.

The argument can be made that a majority of Majors will serve in some staff function at some level and therefore the more that can enhance their staff skills by attending, the better. This argument is sound and leads to discussion of how to provide better staff skills training to all Marine Majors. Could officer staff skills be improved through a more cost efficient manner?

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are many issues that are often debated with regard to resident and non-resident PME. Both have been tweaked and refined over the years due to differing circumstances, size of the Corps, and technology improvement. Critics of each are passionate about their position and often have personal evidence to support their arguments. These issues include the selection process for CSC, its course length, and whether resident and non-resident ILS should have equivalency with respect to promotion selection.

The process by which resident PME students are selected is often an emotional topic for debate based on the current board selection process as well as the implications associated with a selected student turning down the school. An independent survey conducted by the author on the academic year '08-'09 CSC class, in which 71 of the 93 USMC students responded, found that only 38% of the respondents thought the selection

process should remain board selected. 57.7% of the responders thought that the selection process should be a board selection from volunteers, while only the remaining 4.3% thought it should be on a volunteer basis only (See Appendix B). The volunteer attendance had been tried for several years, but MARADMIN 114/06 stated "The voluntary nature of the program did not guarantee the desired mix of students to facilitate the fullest understanding of the MAGTF." The general concern is that some MOS's, specifically aviators, would be less likely to attend. Conversely, in a 2006 *Marine Corps Gazette* article the MCU president stated, "We have examined student performance and success for the past 3 years and have found no significant difference in the quality of the students selected by board as compared to those who volunteer."²⁶ The author's survey of the '08-'09 class also found that of the 17 respondents who did not wish to attend, less than half were aviators. If all the students from this survey who did not want to attend, turned down the opportunity, that would leave 21 aviators in a class of 76 students or 27.6%. That is a change of 3.6%. Of note, academic years '04-'07 (panel selection from volunteers) had a greater number of aviators in attendance than the most recent two years with board selections (38, 44, 32, 33, 30, and 29 respectively).²⁷

Despite previous findings, the most recent (academic year '09-'10) CSC selection board convening message identified those officers not eligible "... who request to be removed from consideration, via email/contact with their monitor and/or questionnaire, prior to the board convening."²⁸ This is not directly a board selection from volunteers, but it is much closer to that option because of the ability to easily remove oneself from consideration. The year prior had an online questionnaire to be filled out that would be considered during the selection board. However, this did not necessarily remove that

officer from consideration as per the new message. Equally controversial in the selection process is the disagreement over the declination process in which the officer is "required to submit their declination in writing with chain of command endorsement to include the first general officer. The declination letter will become part of the officer's OMPF."²⁹ Not surprisingly, 84.5% (60 of the 71) of the '08-'09 CSC class believed this had a negative implication (See Appendix B). Clearly, the messages state this to discourage declinations. Of note, the declination process after selection remains the same for the academic year '09-'10.³⁰

The course length of resident CSC is another issue that is often debated. The current ten month course allows those students to remain on a summer moving cycle which is clearly a benefit for those with children in school. This course length also ensures that MMS accreditation requirements are met. 26 of the 71 (36.6%) responders from this year's class believe that the course could be as effective with a shorter course length. Several of those who did not feel the course could be shortened noted concern that it could not be shortened and still keep officers on a summer move cycle or meet the requirements for MMS accreditation. The inclusion of electives and foreign language classes has added weight to this argument in that these are not required in CSCDEP, yet the program is able to accomplish the same stated mission.

ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS

Alternate systems to providing a command and staff education that would provide a substantial benefit for all Marine Majors and the challenges associated with each will be presented. None of these possibilities are in-depth plans for action, but rather ideas for consideration.

1. Every Marine Major attends resident ILS. The challenge with this system is that for every officer that goes to resident PME, there is one less available that year for leading Marines. This would cause significant manpower and fiscal burdens causing a need for approximately an 80% increase in the number of Marine Majors to maintain the current staffing requirements. This would come to at least 450 additional Majors. This system is unrealistic, but ideal.

2. Maintain the current resident ILS residency numbers while improving the nonresident program by allowing those students dedicated time for study. This dedicated time should have some allocated TAD time to interact with the resident CSC students. The benefits associated with resident PME as noted in both the S&A study of 2001 and Major John Malik's 2002 MMS paper would be shared by all Marine Majors. These benefits would be abbreviated, but realized. The challenges associated with this system are the additional requirement for Majors due to the length of time the 'partial resident' PME officer is not available for operational requirements. If this period of dedicated time is three months, it would require one additional Major for every four that was in the program. That number would be over 100 additional Majors that would again cause significant manpower and fiscal burdens. Therefore, this system is also unrealistic, but closer to an attainable goal.

3. Shorten the resident ILS class to a six month course. This abbreviated course would double the throughput at the possible expense of diminishing the curriculum and educational experience. A 'Juniors' and 'Seniors' course could also be developed, which would have some overlap of the same personnel attending both. The challenges associated with this system are significant. Because a PCS would no longer be required,

those costs will be reduced. TAD costs would greatly increase, however, adding significant budgetary requirements. The human costs would also likely increase in that fewer officers will desire to be TAD away from their homes and family for that period of time in addition to the burden of deployments. Additionally, the MMS program would be significantly degraded in that the accreditation requirements would likely not be met as they currently stand. However, based on the fact that the Navy and Air Force are able to get accredited masters programs with their non-resident programs, accreditation might be attainable.

4. Reduce the resident ILS class size to half the current size. Develop a 'partial residency' program that sends between two and four separate groups of students to fill the vacated seats throughout the academic year. The benefits of resident PME and dedicated time would be extended in an abbreviated version to the 'partial residents.' The challenges with this program would be additional administrative requirements, additional TAD funding requirements, and most importantly institutional acceptance (fleet buy-in).
5. Combine the current CSC and CSCDEP programs into a single ILS program that combines on line classes and lectures with seminar in the current CSCDEP format that concludes with a TAD program of two months for resident study. Participants would complete CSC during transition to allow the participant to focus on his/her professional development. Prior to residency, students would participate in seminar based lessons, online lectures, and virtual teleconferences. The challenges associated with this system are that the entire curriculum and MCU staff would require reorganization, significant TAD funding requirements, and institutional acceptance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Resident and non-resident courses should continue to be analyzed for their effectiveness and continually be refined in order to deliver the best product for the Marine Corps.
2. The possibility of reframing the non-resident ILS program to include dedicated time for study should be thoroughly examined to determine feasibility and impact based on multiple educational curriculum scenarios.
3. CSC lectures should be recorded and those that are determined to be of significant value made available through online access for CSCDEP students, with appropriate copyright issues addressed and resolved.
4. The CSC selection process should remain as it is now for the academic year '09-'10, where only those who wish to attend should be considered for selection.
5. CSCDEP should continue to develop a MMS accredited curriculum in a similar manner to that of the Air Force's or Navy's Non-Resident ILS programs which are accredited. Both programs should be examined to determine the best model or potential pathways for CSCDEP accreditation.

CONCLUSION

Improving Marine Officers staff skills is critically important, specifically for those Marines who will soon fill staff roles. Equally important are those skills that Marine leaders develop daily in the operational forces in the ever changing and developing combat environment that currently exists. The challenge for the Marine Corps is to find the correct balance for today and tomorrow's leaders. This will require frequent re-evaluation by both MCU and the Marine Corps as a whole. Few will argue

that resident CSC will more effectively achieve the specified learning outcomes as defined by the curriculum than will the non-resident course. What is questionable however, is the time and cost that resident CSC require for this more effective educational experience. Time appears to be the true key to improving non-resident PME. Finding the appropriate balance of cost and benefit is the challenge. Educating our leaders is vitally important for the continued advancement of excellence in the Marine Corps, so meeting this challenge should be a priority.

¹ Donald F. Bittner, "The Basic School," *Professional Military Education in the United States: A Historical Dictionary*, ed. William E. Simons (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), 77.

² Marine Corps University, *Marine Corps University Catalog Academic Year 2008-2009*, (Quantico: Marine Corps University, 2008), 24.

³ Ibid., 24.

⁴ Ibid., 41.

⁵ Commandant of the Marine Corps, *United States Marine Corps College of Continuing Education*, http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/cce/mn_faculty.asp (accessed March 10, 2009).

⁶ Marine Corps University, *Marine Corps University Factbook 2008-2009* (Quantico: Marine Corps University, 2008), 19, <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/mcu/factbook/MCU%20Factbook%202008-2009.pdf> (accessed December 15, 2008).

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⁸ Defense Finance and Accounting Service, *2009 Military Pay Tables* (Defense Finance and Accounting Service, 2009), 1, <http://www.dfas.mil/militarypay/militarypaytables/2009MilitaryPayTables.doc> (accessed February 22, 2009).

⁹ Department of the Navy, *Department of the Navy Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Budget Estimates Justification of Estimates February 2008* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2008), 81, http://www.finance.hq.navy.mil/FMB/09PRES/MPMC_Book.pdf (accessed January 15, 2009).

¹⁰ Marine Corps University, *Marine Corps University Factbook 2008-2009* (Quantico: Marine Corps University, 2008), 20, <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/mcu/factbook/MCU%20Factbook%202008-2009.pdf> (accessed December 15, 2008).

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¹² Department of the Navy, *Department of the Navy Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Budget Estimates Justification of Estimates February 2008* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2008), 81, http://www.finance.hq.navy.mil/FMB/09PRES/MPMC_Book.pdf (accessed January 15, 2009).

¹³ Scott Nelson, CCE, email message to author, November 17, 2008.

¹⁴ John Hemleben, CCE, email message to author, March 17, 2009.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Marine Corps University, *Marine Corps University Factbook 2008-2009* (Quantico: Marine Corps University, 2008), 18,

<http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/mcu/factbook/MCU%20Factbook%202008-2009.pdf>
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¹⁷ Robert F. Woodaman and Robert Liebe, "Value of Resident PME: Results and Recommendations from 2001 PME Study," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Jul 2002 Vol. 86, Issue 7, 31.

¹⁸ Major John C. Makil, USMC, "Non-Resident and Resident Intermediate Level School: A Closer Look at Equivalency," 11.

¹⁹ Ibid., 10.

²⁰ Major Raul Lianez, USMC and Major Luis R. Zamarripa, USMC, "The Effects of U.S. Marine Corps Graduate Education Programs on Officer Performance: A Comparative Analysis of Professional Military Education and Graduate Education," 79.

²¹ Major Joel M. Hoffman, "Significant Factors in Predicting Promotion to Major, Lieutenant Colonel, and Colonel in the United States Marine Corps," 83.

²² Commandant of the Marine Corps, FY 2008 USMC Lieutenant Colonel Selection Board Statistics, September 22, 2006, 1, https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/M_RA_HOME/MM/PR/MMPR1/MMPR1_PROMOTION_BOARDS/FY08_MMPR1_PROMOTION_BOARDS/ACTIVE_FY08_MMPR1_PROMOTION_BOARDS/FY08%20-%20ACTIVE%20-%20LTCOL/FY08%20USMC%20LTCOL_STATS.PDF

²³ Dr. Charles D. McKenna, interview with author, January 15, 2009.

²⁴ Col. Darrell Browning, USMC (Ret), interview with author, January 15, 2009.

²⁵ Major Raul Lianez, USMC and Major Luis R. Zamarripa, USMC, "The Effects of U.S. Marine Corps Graduate Education Programs on Officer Performance: A Comparative Analysis of Professional Military Education and Graduate Education," (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2003), 34.

²⁶ MajGen Donald R. Gardner, USMC (Ret), "Teaching for the Future," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Feb 2006 Vol. 90, Issue 2, 10.

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<http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/mcu/factbook/MCU%20Factbook%202008-2009.pdf>
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²⁸ Commandant of the Marine Corps, Academic Year (AY) 09-10 Intermediate Level School Board Announcement, MARADMIN 568/08, October 6, 2008.
<http://www.marines.mil/news/messages/Pages/MARADMIN568-08.aspx> (accessed January 7, 2009).

²⁹ Commandant of the Marine Corps, Academic Year 08/09 Intermediate Level School (ILS) Board Announcement, MARADMIN 585/07, October 9, 2007.
<http://www.marines.mil/news/messages/Pages/2007/ACADEMICYEAR.aspx> (accessed January 7, 2009).

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Commentary on Sources

The sources referenced in the paper were located by reference directly from Dr. Bittner, online search conducted at the Library of the Marine Corps, or word of mouth from classmates while discussing the topic. Interviews with Colonel Browning, USMC (Ret), Dean McKenna, and Mr. John Hiemleben upon Dr. Bittner's recommendation provided solid background information and understanding.

The primary sources referenced were either provided by hardcopy from Ms. Rohler or accessed online through the Marine Corps website. Secondary sources were provided directly from Dr. Bittner, provided directly from the author (Maj Joel Hoffman), or found through the Library's search tools. Several sources not directly referenced provided information that helped to focus the direction of the paper. All sources used were educational and useful for development of the paper.

APPENDIX A

ACRONYMS

AWS - Amphibious Warfare School

CCE - College of Continuing Education

CIAO - Culture and Interagency Operations

CSC - Command and Staff College

CSCDEP - Command and Staff College Distance Education Program

EDCOM - Education Command

EWS - Expeditionary Warfare School

ILS - Intermediate Level School

LtCol - Lieutenant Colonel

MCCDC - Marine Corps Combat Development Command

MCU - Marine Corps University

MCWAR - Marine Corps War College

Op-Art - Operational Art

PCS - Permanent Change of Station

PME - Professional Military Education

SAW - School of Advanced Warfighting

TAD - Temporary Additional Duty

TBS - The Basic School

TECOM - Training and Education Command

TRNGCOM - Training Command

WFTS - Warfighting...from the Sea

APPENDIX B

USMC Students only - all others disregard

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please assist me by providing some feedback for my MMS paper.

Simply reply to this message and delete the responses that are not correct (Example: for a "Yes/No" question where your answer is "Yes", just delete the "No" in your responding email). It should take less than 2 minutes.

1) Have you completed half or more of the CSC Non-Residency course?

Yes/No

2) Did you want to come to Resident CSC?

Yes/No

3) Do you think Resident CSC should be:

a) Board selected b) Volunteer basis c) Board selected from
volunteers

4) Do you believe that the requirement for an OQR annotation for declining to attend Resident PME has a negative implication?

Yes/No

5) Do you think the Resident CSC course could be as effective with a shorter course length?

Yes/No

5.5) If yes on question 5, how long do you think the course could be to maintain current effectiveness?

a) 8 Months b) 6 Months c) 4 Months
d) 3 Months e) Other, specify ____

Other comments welcome.

Thanks again.